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ABSTRACT

A review of Oklahoma higher education faculty productivity at state supported institutions resulted in recommendations to enhance quality while working within policy goals. The review identified faculty workload as the central issue and found that studies consistently show that full-time faculty members work 50 to 65 hours a week with about half to 56 percent of their time spent on instructional activities. The report discusses productivity related issues including effects of the traditional academic reward system which focuses on research achievement over teaching achievement. A study of Oklahoma State University (OSU) faculty productivity found that both the research productivity of regular faculty and instructional activities have increased. Another, 1-week, time-mangement study of seven academics suggested that Oklahoma faculty spend 68 percent of their time on instruction, preparing for classes, and counseling students. The review concluded that any successful undertaking to change faculty productivity or the way higher education conducts business must involve a partnership between State Regents, institutions of higher education, and their governing boards. In particular they recommend that Regents adopt 10 recommendations that cover education for State Regents, faculty workload, evaluation measures, mission and academic priorities clarification, funding, curriculum reform, instructional technology, learning productivity, adjunct faculty, and public perception. (JB)

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ED 365 248

Faculty Productivity

Report & Recommendations to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

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Faculty Advisory Committee

December, 1993

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FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

to the

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

1993

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Report & Recommendations to the
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Faculty salaries represent one of the state's largest costs, second only to salaries for K-12 teachers and Medicaid. In terms of the higher education budget, faculty salaries represented approximately 31 percent of expenditures or $227 million in FY 93. Given this substantial state investment, policymakers have a responsibility to know how faculty members are spending their time and to demand efficiency and effectiveness.

Faculty salaries represented $227 million of FY 93 higher education expenses.

It is clear that resource constraints are expected to continue, if not worsen, in the foreseeable future. The demand for higher education is growing, Oklahoma faculty salaries are below regional and national averages, and state resources are inadequate. According to many recent reports, a sizeable number of faculty in Oklahoma and throughout the nation will retire in the next decade, demand in the national market will substantially exceed faculty supply, and more competitive compensation packages will be needed to attract and retain faculty at Oklahoma colleges and universities.

The Faculty Advisory Committee to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education acknowledges the state's responsibility to examine and ensure that state resources are being wisely spent, particularly investments comprising a large share of the state budget. The purpose of this review is to (1) identify and acknowledge the issue, (2) provide cursory and summary description about Oklahoma faculty and productivity issues, and (3) recommend a course of action to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The recommended

course of action will link with priorities that preserve and enhance quality programs and, at the same time, achieve important policy objectives established by the State Regents.

THE ISSUE

Studies of faculty workload are not new. One of the first studies was conducted in 1919, and many have been conducted since that time. The results have varied little over time. In general, the studies show that full-time faculty members work 50 to 65 hours a week. A 1988 study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that faculty at all types of institutions on the average worked 53 hours a week.

Average faculty work week=53 hours
Time on instructional activities=56%

The question "How much time do faculty work?" should be expanded to the question "How much time do faculty spend in the classroom, preparing for class, and working with students?" Studies show that faculty members spend about half to 56 percent of their time on students in the classroom, preparing for classes, grading papers, and testing. The rest of faculty time is spent on administrative duties and research. Teaching loads ranged from 6.4 hours in research universities to 15.2 hours in community colleges. This is consistent with the missions of different types of institutions. Instruction is the dominant faculty assignment at the two-year colleges and likewise carries more weight at the four-year institutions than at the research institutions. Research and the discovery of new knowledge is a major faculty assignment at the research institutions although faculty at the two- and four-year institutions engage in institutional or integrative research as well.

Faculty are often criticized for their focus on research instead of teaching. The fact of the matter is that higher education has concentrated its reward system on conducting

research. Jim Mingle, Executive Director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) observes that "The majority of faculty are playing the game, but there is evidence they don't find it appropriate to their evaluation and their jobs."

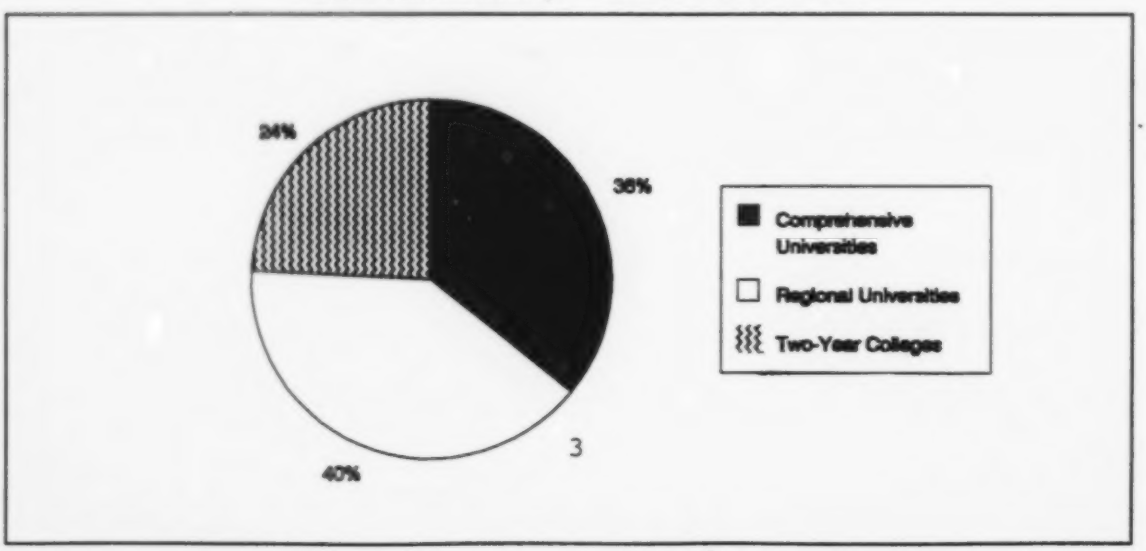
A recent SHEEO survey of the states found an increasing number of legislatively prompted studies of faculty workload. Some states have developed statutory requirements regarding faculty teaching loads. Other states are requiring an annual report on what faculty do in the way of teaching freshmen and sophomores and counseling and advising.

Several observers have noted that the renewed interest in faculty workload is most notable in states with worsening budget problems.

OKLAHOMA FACULTY

There are 4,116 faculty in Oklahoma public higher education. Some 36 percent of the faculty teach at the two comprehensive universities, 40 percent teach at the ten regional universities, and 24 percent teach at the two-year colleges. Some 24 percent of the faculty are classified as full professors, 17 percent are associate professors, 24 percent are assistant professors, and 35 percent are instructors. These figures do not represent the part-time faculty who work for substantially lower pay and no benefits and who comprise an increasingly large proportion of faculties in this state and nationwide.

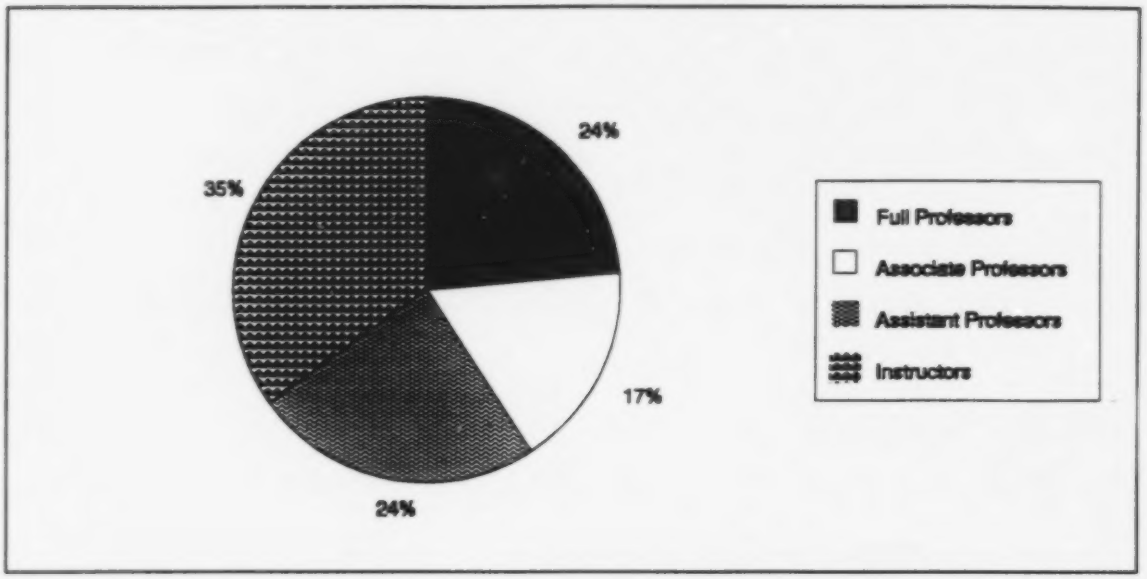
Full-Time Faculty - Where They Teach



The largest proportion of the higher education budget goes for faculty salaries and benefits. The average Oklahoma faculty salary for all ranks and at all

Average Faculty Salary = $38,556
Oklahoma faculty taught 124,719 FTE students and brought $173.8 million research dollars to the state.

Full-Time Faculty by Rank



institutions was $38,556 in FY 92/93 ranging from $12,768 to $103,000. For FY 93, faculty taught 3,642,661 student credit hours for 124,719 FTE college/university students, brought in $173.8 million in external dollars for research, and contributed countless hours in public service activities.

OSU Study. Oklahoma State University undertook a "Faculty Productivity Study" in Summer 1993. The study found that research productivity of regular faculty at OSU has increased and that instructional activity has also increased. Within the past three years, the percentage of student credit hours that are taught by regular faculty has increased by 7.18 percent for lower-division courses and by 10.92 percent for upper-division courses.

The OSU study pointed to several interesting comparisons. Research universities are often criticized because full-time faculty do not teach undergraduates. OSU's full-time faculty undergraduate teaching of 7.33 contact hours per week compares favorably to the 2.6 to 3.8 hour range for similar institutions in a Carnegie Foundation study.

Instructional load for OSU faculty increased 7.18% for lower division and 10.92% for upper division courses.

The study cites American Association of University Professors' guidelines which suggest that a full-time teaching load for a person who does nothing but teach should not exceed 12 credit hours per semester for undergraduate or 9 credit hours of graduate teaching. When other scholarly work is required, as it is at a comprehensive university, 9 credit hours is considered a maximum at the undergraduate level and 6 at the graduate level.

One important recommendation coming from the OSU study was that teaching should be evaluated and rewarded in considerations of promotion, tenure, and salary increases.

Teaching should be evaluated and rewarded in considerations of promotion, tenure, and salary increases.

Faculty Advisory Committee Time Study. A statewide faculty productivity study has not been done in Oklahoma, and the cost and effort involved in such an exercise make the activity questionable. In the absence of such a study, the Faculty Advisory Committee determined that an interesting, if not useful, activity would be a one-week time management study. Each of the seven members of the Committee agreed to record all of his/her activities for a one week period in October. The records were kept and the results were compiled and averaged. While the effort did not use representative sampling techniques, the Faculty

Advisory Committee itself is representative of all higher education institutions in Oklahoma--comprehensive, four-year, two-year, and independent. Members of the Committee judge their work to be typical of their full-time faculty colleagues statewide. Another limitation of the study is that this is only a one-week snapshot. Faculty Advisory Committee members judge that while the length of their work weeks is typical, a different snapshot at the start of the semester for instance, might show more time spent on student advising.

One-Week Time Study

Average Faculty Load By Duty and Institutional Type

	Comprehensive	Four-Year	Two-Year	Independent	Average
Teaching Hours (including labs)	11	17.25	22.88	13	16.46
Student Advising	4.5	6.5	3.63	2.5	4.54
Class Preparation (including grading)	21.13	14.25	14.63	13.25	16.18
Directing Theses and Dissertations	6.8	0	0	0	1.93
Administrative Duties	8.25	11.75	6.75	13.5	9.57
Research/Writing	20	4	.88	0*	7.11
Professional Development	0.5	3.75	2.	0	1.79
Hours	72.18	57.50	50.77	42.25	57.58

* Atypical

As represented by the Faculty Advisory Committee's time management study, findings are that:

- **Oklahoma faculty work an average of 57.6 hours per week. This compares favorably to the 53 hour norm cited in recent studies.**
- **Oklahoma faculty spend 68 percent of their time on instruction, preparing for classes, and counseling students compared to the 56 percent norm cited in recent national studies.**
- **Time spent in the classroom by Oklahoma faculty appears to substantially exceed the national norm of 6.4 hours for research universities and 15.2 hours for two year colleges.**

Other findings from the study are reflective of national norms and consistent with institutional mission:

- A significant amount of faculty time is expended on administrative duties, but little time is afforded for professional development.
- Teaching load at the comprehensive universities is less than the regional university load which is in turn less than the two-year load.
- Class preparation time is substantially higher at the comprehensive universities.
- Undergraduate students at the four-year and two-year institutions receive substantially more faculty guidance and advising, but students at the comprehensive universities receive more attention on thesis and dissertation work.
- Faculty at the comprehensive universities spend substantially more time on research/writing.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

An examination of faculty workload and faculty productivity is appropriate as state policymakers seek to find and justify funding for higher education and as higher education leaders seek to improve outcomes. The Faculty Advisory Committee recommends a systemwide course of action that will enhance quality programs and achieve important higher education policy objectives. Rather than mandating workloads for faculty members or conducting a rash of student contact-hour studies or workload analyses, the Faculty Advisory Committee suggests that the current situation be viewed as an opportunity to examine how the business of higher education is conducted and to determine if there is a better way to operate our colleges and universities.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education have sole authority for approving courses and programs, for assigning institutional missions, setting standards, and providing funds for campus operations. State Statutes have also given the State Regents authority to establish guidelines for faculty workload:

> . . . the Regents shall make a study of faculty and staff workloads and establish appropriate guidelines and standards for such at all colleges and universities in the State System (70 O.S. 1991, Section 3215)

Governing boards have authority relating to faculty employment decisions, tenure, salaries, scheduling, and the like. It is clear to the Faculty Advisory Committee that any successful undertaking to change faculty productivity or the way higher education conducts business will have to involve a partnership between the State Regents and institutions and their governing boards.

The following recommendations are respectfully submitted to the State Regents:

1. REGENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM. The State Regents, with the assistance of the Faculty Advisory Committee, should conduct a workshop within the next year on the role of faculty in governance and faculty workload and productivity enhancement.

2. FACULTY WORKLOAD. State Regents should exercise their responsibilities in the area of faculty workload as referenced in 70 O. S. 1991, Section 3215.

3. MEASURES. State Regents should provide leadership for institutions in efforts to document teaching, scholarship, research, and public service activities and establish evaluation measures.

4. MISSION/ACADEMIC PRIORITIES.

   a. The Faculty Advisory Committee supports the State Regents in efforts to ensure a clear definition of the mission assigned to each institution. The mission statement should identify the kinds of research and teaching that are most important to the institution and the state. A clear assignment will help an institution and its governing board to establish a better focus and clearer priorities.

   b. State Regents should work with governing boards and institutions to encourage an examination of whether faculty members are spending time on activities that coincide with the mission State Regents have assigned the institution and priorities set forth in the Academic Plan of the institution. The examination should also review incentive structures established to ensure that faculty efforts are channeled toward these priorities.

5. FUNDING. State Regents should carve out funds from the E&G Budget for institutional programs that will enhance effective teaching, research, and public service consistent with the institution's mission. The Faculty Advisory Committee particularly recognizes the need for professional development opportunities for faculty.

6. CURRICULUM REFORM. The State Regents should continue the Academic Planning/Resource Allocation (APRA) effort and similar activities designed to improve the focus and quality of a college education, recognizing the role of faculty in determining student curricular needs for a particular course of study.

7. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY. While some classes cannot be effectively taught through new instructional media, the Faculty Advisory Committee recognizes that instructional technology will impact the faculty productivity issue. The State Regents are encouraged (a) to work with the higher education community to develop a vision and a plan for the State System that builds on the new technology and breaks down traditional turfs and campus walls, (b) to develop policies for instructional technology that safeguard the academic integrity of the learning experience, (c) to work with institutions and governing boards to establish improved faculty incentive structures for instructional technology, (d) to provide special grant funding to train Oklahoma faculty for electronic teaching, and (e) to make a significant investment in the electronic infrastructure that will connect all institutions of higher education and provide equivalent service throughout all parts of the state. The Faculty Advisory Committee urges the State Regents to solicit full faculty input as the instructional technology era unfolds.

8. LEARNING PRODUCTIVITY. Rather than "faculty productivity," the issue should perhaps be refocused on educational system productivity or "learning productivity." The Faculty Advisory Committee concurs with D. Bruce Johnstone, chancellor of the State University of New York, who asserts that "The true measure of our productivity will be found in student learning." The Faculty Advisory Committee encourages the State Regents to sharpen policies, establish incentives, and undertake initiatives that will encourage students in preparation for higher education and in purposeful enrollment, degree progression, and lifelong learning.

9. ADJUNCT FACULTY. The Faculty Advisory Committee invites the State Regents to join them in undertaking an examination of the role and use of adjunct faculty in Oklahoma higher education. While the use of adjunct faculty is necessary and advantageous in many respects, there is growing concern that the higher education enterprise may be approaching the point of "over-leveraging" the permanent full-time faculty with the use of part-time adjuncts. To the extent that institutional quality and integrity may be compromised, an examination is warranted.

10. PUBLIC PERCEPTION. The Faculty Advisory Committee requests that the State Regents, as the representative body of higher education, engage in an active effort to educate the populace of Oklahoma about the appropriate role of faculty. In particular, we urge immediate factual response to incomplete and inaccurate public perceptions.

In summary, the Faculty Advisory Committee believes that the above steps will guide the State System in the improved use of resources and improved faculty productivity. All of

the activities required of faculty should be evaluated according to their suitability and quality and should be recognized. If we are able to evaluate the work of students, we can likewise establish and apply evaluation measures to all of the activities we deem vital to our profession. In so doing, the Faculty Advisory Committee submits that in undertaking the above steps, the State Regents, governing boards, and institutions will provide an effective framework for improvement.